

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PRETOR 04506 041759Z
ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 HA-05 TRSE-00 CIAE-00
DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05
PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11 /094 W
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R 041727Z AUG 78
FM AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1989
INFO AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN
AMCONSUL DURBAN
AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG
USMISSION GENEVA
AMEMBASSY GABORONE
/AMEMBASSY LONDON 2727
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L PRETORIA 4506

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINS, SHUM, SF
SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR USG ASSISTANCE TO SAVE "GOCH STREET
TERRORIST"

REF: PRETORIA 4243 AND PREVIOUS

1. EMBASSY HAS BEEN APPROACHED BY ADVOCATE CLIFFORD MAILER
ACCOMPANIED BY MS. PRISCILLA JANNA ON BEHALF OF SOLOMON
MAHLANGU, RECENTLY CONVICTED UNDER THE TERRORISM ACT AND
SENTENCED TO DEATH FOR HIS PARTICIPATION IN THE "GOCH STREET
INCIDENT" IN JUNE 1977. AS REPORTED IN REFTELS, MAHLANGU
HAS BEEN REFUSED LEAVE TO APPEAL BY BOTH THE TRIAL COURT
AND THE APPELLATE DIVISION OF THE SUPREME COURT OF SOUTH
AFRICAN IN BLOEMFONTEIN. (COPY OF APPEAL PETITION WAS
POUCHED TO CHARLES RUNYON ON JULY 21; ADDITIONAL COPY POUCHED
TO USUN ON AUGUST 4).

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2. MAILER TOLD EMBOFFS THAT IN ADDITION TO GROSS PRECEDURAL
IRREGULARITIES, MAHLANGU'S SENTENCE BEARS LITTLE RELATION
TO THE CRIME (HE DID NOT FIRE HIS WEAPON, ALTHOUGH TWO
WHITE CIVILIANS WERE KILLED BY HIS COLLEAGUE.) ACCORDING TO
MAILER, THE ONLY WAY TO SAVE MAHLANGU'S LIFE IS AN APPEAL
TO THE STATE PRESIDENT FOR A PARDON. MAILER SAID HE THOUGHT THAT THE
FORCE OF THEIR APPEAL WOULD BE SIGNIFICANTLY STRENGTHENED

IF INFLUENTIAL EMBASSIES RAISED THE MAHLANGU SENTENCE WITH THE SAG. EMBOFFS TOLD MAILER AND JANNA THAT HIS REQUEST WOULD BE BROUGHT TO THE AMBASSADOR'S ATTENTION AND ASKED WHICH OTHER EMBASSIES WERE BEING APPROACHED. MAILER SAID HE PLANNED ON CONTACTING THE DUTCH, SWEDES, BRITISH, GERMANS, AND ISRAELIS, AMONGST OTHERS AND PROMISED TO KEEP IN TOUCH.

3. THE COUNSELOR OF DUTCH EMBASSY INFORMED EMBOFF ON AUG. 4 THAT HE HAD REPORTED MAILER'S APPROACH ON THE MAHLANGU CASE ON AUGUST 3 AND ASKED IF THE US EMBASSY WAS CONTEMPLATING ANY ACTION AT THIS TIME. THE COUNSELOR SAID (ON OPEN PHONE) THAT HE HAD RECOMMENDED THAT THE HAGUE NOT GET INVOLVED IN A PROTEST IN ORDER TO "SAVE OUR FIRE FOR A STRONGER CASE". THE COUNSELOR NOTED, HOWEVER, THAT AS A RESULT OF PRESSURE FROM DOMESTIC GROUPS, THE DUTCH GOVERNMENT MAY HAVE TO RAISE THE MAHLANGU CASE WITH THE SAG.

4. COMMENT: MAHLANGU DEFENSE TEAM APPEARS DETERMINED TO TRY AND GET AS MANY EMBASSIES AND PRIVATE GROUPS AS POSSIBLE TO MAKE REPRESENTATIONS TO THE SAG TO SAVE MAHLANGU. (JANNA CALLED EMBASSY ON AUGUST 4 AND SAID THAT SHE HAD SPOKEN WITH AMBASSADOR YOUNG ABOUT THE CASE.) DEPARTMENT MAY BE APPROACHED BY US GROUPS OR MEMBERS OF CONGRESS IN THE COMING WEEKS REGARDING MAHLANGU'S FATE.

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5. WE DOUBT THERE IS MUCH IF ANYTHING WE CAN DO TO INFLUENCE THIS CASE BUT BELIEVE IT MIGHT BE FEASIBLE AND WORTHWHILE TO DISCUSS IT INFORMALLY WITH DFA, NOTING CONCERNED SOUTH AFRICANS HAD BROUGHT THE CASE TO OUR ATTENTION, RECOGNIZING IT IS REALLY NOT OUR AFFAIR, BUT SUGGESTING THAT, GIVEN THE APPARENT CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE CASE, SAG COULD AVOID CONSIDERABLE INTERNATIONAL CONDEMNATION IN THIS INSTANCE IF THE DEATH SENTENCE WERE COMMUTED BY THE PRESIDENT. WE WILL SEEK AN APPROPRIATE OCCASION TO DO SO.
EDMONDSON

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NNN

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Decaption Note:
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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
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